

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOGADISCIO 0338

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SO, UR

SUBJECT: BBC BROADCAST ON SOVIET INFLUENCE IN SOMALIA

1. BBC SOMALI LANGUAGE BROADCAST ON MARCH 5 AT 1730 LOCAL TIME REPORTEDLY DEVOTED TEN TO FIFTEEN MINUTES OF ITS THIRTY MINUTE PROGRAM TIME TO COMMENTS ON SOVIET INFLUENCE IN SOMALIA, PARTICULARLY IN OFFICE OF PRESIDENCY AND NATIONAL SECURITY SERVICE (NSS). BBC PROGRAM WAS ALLEGEDLY BASED UPON RECENT PUBLICATION OF QTE INSITIUTE OF STRATEGIC CONFLICTS QTE. NAME MAY BE GARBLE. IN ANY CASE BBC BURUE PUBLICATION WAS EVIDENTLY REVIEWED RECENTLY BY LONDON TIMES. BROADCAST WAS REPEATED AT 2100 LOCAL MARCH 5.

2. SOMALI FSL WHO HEARD BROADCAST SAID BBC REPORTED FOLLOWING REGARDING SOVIET PRESENCE IN SOMALIA:

A. FIFTEEN SOVIET KGB OFFICERS ARE ASSIGNED TO OFFICE OF PRESIDENCY AND SERVE AS ADVISORS TO PRESIDENT SIAD.

B. NATIONAL SECURITY SERVICE NO LONGER UNDER DIRECTION OF COL. MYMED SUYEIHAN BUT IS NOW DIRECTED BY KGB AND MOHAMED

ALI SAMATAR, SECSTATE FOR DEFENSE.

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C. SOVIET PRESENCE IN SOMALIA TOTALS 4,000 -- WITH 2,000 MIL ADVISORS AND 2,000 OTHER FUNCTIONARIES, INCLUDING LARGE KGB COMPONENT.

D. CHIEF OF SOVIET KGB VISITED SOMALIA IN 1972.

E. EXECUTION OF TEN SOMALI SHEIKHS ON JANUARY 23 WAS CARRIED OUT ON ADVICE OF KGB ADVISORS.

F. SOVIET GRIP ON SOMALIA WOULD BE COMPLETE EXCEPT FOR SOMALI MASSES, WHO AS GOOD MUSLIMS HEARTILY DESPISE SOVIETS AND THEIR SYSTEM.

3. ACCORDING SOMALI LOCALS, BBC BROADCAST CREATED QUITE A STIR IN MOGADISCIO, WHERE LARGE NUMBERS FAITHFULLY ASSEMBLE ON SIDEWALKS AT TEA AND COFFEE HOUSES TO HEAR NIGHTLY 1730 BBC BROADCAST IN SOMALI. THOSE WHO MISSED 1730 BROADCAST ON MARCH 5 WERE URGED BY FRIENDS TO MONITOR 2100 BBC PROGRAM.

4. DIFFICULT TO ASSESS HOW WIDELY BBC COMMENTS ON KGB ROLE IN SOMALIA ARE CREDITED. WE CONTINUE TO RECEIVE REPORTS OF GROWING SOMALI DISLIKE FOR SOVIETS, WHOSE POPULARITY PERHAPS REACHED NEW LOW FOLLOWING DEATH OF TEN SHEIKHS. SOVIETS MOREOVER PROVIDE EASY TARGET FOR FRUSTRATED URBAN POPULATIONS FACED WITH FOOD SHORTAGES, SHRINKING SALARIES AND OTHER PROBLEMS. MANY WILL PROBABLY READILY ACCEPT BBC COMMENTS.

5. BBC PROGRAM HAS PROMISED SOMALI AUDIENCES MORE ON SOVIET ROLE IN SOMALIA IN SUCCEEDING BROADCASTS.

6. GSDR TRIED ON ONE OCCASION TO LIMIT PUBLIC MONITORING OF BBC BROADCAST IN TEA SHOPS AND STREET CORNERS BUT ABANDONED EFFORT. IF MARCH 5 ALLEGATIONS STRIKE CLOSE TO HOME, GSDR MAY AGAIN ATTEMPT TO REDUCE SIZE OF BBC SIDEWALK AUDIENCES.
HAMRICK

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